



California State Fire Marshal CODE INTERPRETATION

Date Issued	10-21-03	Interpretation #	03-033
Topic	Fire Sprinkler Design in Group H, Division 8 Occupancies		
Code Section(s)	§904.2.6.4, California Building Code (2001 ed)		
Requested by	Aaron McCarthy Stanford University Environmental Health & Safety / Fire Marshal's Office 408 Oak Rd. Stanford, CA 94305-8007		

Since Ordinary Hazard Group 3 is not defined or addressed in the 1999 edition of NFPA 13, is Ordinary Hazard Group 2 sprinkler design allowed for Group H, Division 8 Occupancies using a 3000 sq. ft design area? Is it the intent of §904.2.6.4 to require the sprinkler systems in Group H, Division 8 Occupancies use a specific design method (i.e., the Area/Density Method vs. the Room Design Method as covered in §5-2.3.2 and §5-2.3.3 of the 1996 edition of NFPA 13 respectively)?

§904.2.6.4 requires that the fire sprinkler systems for research laboratories and similar areas of Group H, Division 8 occupancies be designed for not less than that required for Ordinary Hazard Group 3 with a design density of not less than 3000 square feet. This section was initially adopted and published in the 1992 edition of the California Building Code as §3802(f)(4) and was based on the 1989 edition of NFPA 13 for design density of Ordinary Hazard Group 3 (area/density: 1500/.21 and 4000/.165).

Since Ordinary Hazard Group 3 is not specifically addressed in the 1999 edition of NFPA 13, the design density criteria of the 1989 edition of NFPA 13 pertaining to Ordinary Hazard Group 3 must be utilized when applying the provisions of §904.2.6.4.

The design density requirement of not less than 3000 square feet is very specific with no mention of any exceptions allowed. The specific requirements of the California Building Code take president over that of referenced standard requirements.